

The Historical Trail 1992



The Birthplace of Children's Day

The Historical Trail

Yearbook of the Historical Society and the
Commission on Archives and History of the
Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of
The United Methodist Church

1992

FOREWORD

History is like a diamond in the rough. Some people ignore it just as some people think the uncut diamond a piece of worthless glass. Some people examine the stone but discard it because of lack of interest. Some people superficially look at history without interest and receive no valuable insights into the present. The specialist in gems recognizes the value of the interesting "piece of glass," has it cut, shaped, and polished into a beautiful and valuable diamond. History, if examined and studied, can develop into a gem for better understanding the present and for aid in greater appreciation for the accomplishments of people in the past.

This year, *The Historical Trail* will include *The Birthplace of Children's Day* by John Smiley and William Weller, *High Winds of New Jersey* by Miriam L. Coffee, *The Trail of the Glendale United Methodist Church and the Tulip Trees* (information from Boyd F. Bedlyon, Jr.) by Miriam L. Coffee, *News of the Historical Society and the Commission on Archives and History* by Reverend Robert Steelman, *Index of Authors and Articles* (thirty years) by Reverend Robert Steelman, *The General Conference Invasion* by Miriam L. Coffee, and *An Expression of Gratitude* by Dr. J. Hillman Coffee.

This year, 1992, is the thirtieth year for the publication of *The Historical Trail*. In that time, there have been only two editors: Reverend Robert B. Steelman (1961-1967) and Dr. J. Hillman Coffee (1968-1992). I express the feelings of the Historical Executive Committee, the many contributors, and the readers who all have expressed their appreciation and thanks to these two editors.

Dr. Coffee has resigned as editor because of health reasons. With the 1993 edition, Reverend Charles Green (Box 6095, Philadelphia, Pa. 19114) has been appointed and approved by the Historical Executive Committee to be the new editor of *The Historical Trail*. Reverend Green is serving his last year as Chairperson of the Commission on Archives and History.

The Historical Executive Committee is working on a plan to have each historical representative of the local churches become more involved in historical activities. This person will receive information of the Historical Society's work and plans. The church representative will then be responsible for presenting the information to the local church.

In the article by Reverend Steelman is a list of representatives on the Executive Committee for each district.

Let us make history come alive. Do at least one thing in each church that is presently historical or is so important that it will become an item of history.

Time and life, like the sand in an hour glass, slip by so swiftly! Respect yesterday. Use today wisely. Plan tomorrow carefully. Eternity will reveal the results.

Watch for the Historical Society logo.

MIRIAM L. COFFEE, PRESIDENT
S.N.J. Conference Historical Society

A FEW WORDS

Being editor for twenty-four issues of *The Historical Trail* (1968-1992) has been quite a learning experience. I have learned that there is much valuable and interesting information concerning the churches and people of the Southern New Jersey Conference that needs to be shared. It has not always been easy to find persons to write the articles for *The Historical Trail*, but, most of the time, this was not a problem. Now "due dates" for material reaching me is another matter! I soon learned to make deadlines earlier than required. It is rewarding to learn that the church, its personnel, and its activities are greatly loved, respected, and necessary in the members' lives. I have learned patience as well as new and interesting information. I have learned that God's work continues regardless of the handicaps and that God uses everyone who is willing to be used. Acting as editor has been an enjoyable privilege as well as, at times, a burden.

I whole-heartedly appreciate and thank those who have written articles or turned in information to share with others. Many kind people have expressed their enjoyment in reading *The Historical Trail*. I have only words of praise for our printer, Sharp Offset Printing, Inc., who has been so very cooperative, patient, and understanding through these years. I am sure his patience, at times, must have been near exasperation. It has been very helpful when people suggested ideas to be included in the booklet.

My prayers and best wishes are extended to the Reverend Charles Green, the new editor. I know *The Historical Trail* will continue to grow under his guidance.

J. HILLMAN COFFEE
Retiring Editor

THE ORIGIN OF CHILDREN'S DAY

by John Smiley and William Weller

It all began in a new, little church, the Methodist Episcopal Trinity Chapel, located in the rural community of Stockton Township (later to be named Merchantville) in Camden County, New Jersey. The date was Sunday, June 10, 1866. Amid a setting of pioneer Methodism and inspired by a tragic personal experience, the time cherished tradition of Children's Day was first observed.

The Story of Trinity Chapel

The town, which is now known as Merchantville, was actually founded in 1857 by a group of Philadelphia merchants, so the name eventually selected for the town was most appropriate. These gentlemen purchased large tracts of land in what was then called Stockton Township, out of which the Borough of Merchantville was later to be carved. Their houses were all located on the Camden-Moorestown Pike, the present Maple Avenue. The founding fathers were followed by others who helped to build a good foundation for this community. These included David Stetson, U.S. Senator Alexander Cattell, Elijah Cattell, James Finn, Isaac Hinchman, Isaac Starn and others.

As the area developed, the need for local religious services became increasingly apparent. The nearest church was the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, which was located on the old Camden-Burlington Pike (now Westfield Avenue) at Cove Road, that church property now being part of the Bethel Cemetery.

David S. Stetson, a dedicated member of Bethel Church, saw the need of the unchurched in his neighborhood. Under the leadership of Stetson and Matthias Homer, a group was gathered together and began meeting on Sunday mornings in the Stetson home. This house was subsequently moved and is now located at 32 Fithian Avenue in Merchantville, a well preserved and currently occupied residence. As the Sabbath classes grew, they moved into the "Pay School," a small, wooden building opposite the present location of Trinity Church. Through the dedicated efforts of the faithful, the numbers continued to grow. When it reached a total of seventy-three (twelve of whom were teachers), the obvious decision was made to seek a meeting place larger than the school-house.

Determined that they should have a permanent home, the Methodists in the community met on March 11, 1865 and, under the leadership of David Stetson, approved articles of incorporation for "The Trinity Chapel at Merchantville." This was duly affirmed on April 4, 1865. Those elected to serve as the original Trustees were David Stetson, Matthias Homer, Elijah Cattell, C. Felton, Thomas Sinex, Issac Hinchman, J. A. Starn, C. W. Starn, and C. Sinex.

This historic meeting on March 11 marks the formal beginning of Trinity Church and, as such, it is especially honored by all of those who have followed, claiming Trinity as their church home. It is also well to remember that this founding of a new church was accomplished during the time of the tragic Civil War in our country. We can know that the faith that undergirded these courageous and dedicated people was forged in the fire of the disastrous times in which they lived.

On the evening of August 2, 1865, the Trustees met, and, after discussion of the pressing needs for future growth, assigned three of their members to the task of securing a suitable property on which to build. This committee was authorized to interview James Finn and, if possible, secure from him the grant of a plot of land across the road from the Pay School. Mr. Finn, after consulting with his partner, William Howell, consented to donate the property that was desired. This was unused ground, 100 by 300 feet, situated at the corner of the Moorestown Pike (now Maple Avenue) and Whiskey Road (now Chapel Avenue). "Whiskey Road" had received its name from a distillery located on that road somewhere in the neighborhood of the intersection with the present Haddonfield Road.

The original "Minute Book," still in the possession of Trinity Church, reveals the enthusiasm with which this small company of faith-filled Methodists worked. On the very day on which the gift of the plot was made known, August 5, the Trustees met and appointed Matthias Homer, Charles Starn and Isaac Hinchman to serve as a Building Committee.

Plans were drawn without delay for a chapel, 32 feet by 48 feet, and the contract awarded to Thomas Leaming of Gloucester City. The entire cost of the structure was to be \$3600. It is interesting to scan the records of the many meetings held by the Trustees during those days. They met nearly every week, reporting on the progress of the building and arranging for the collection of monies to pay for the construction. In those notes are the lists of contributors and the amounts given - evidences of considerable sacrifice on the part of the membership.

The cornerstone of the Trinity Chapel was laid on the afternoon of Saturday, October 21, 1865. The Rev. David W. Bartine of Philadelphia was the principal speaker with other clergymen from Camden and vicinity assisting in the service. This new house of worship, topped by a tall spire-capped steeple, was dedicated on Sunday, March 18, 1866, by Bishop Matthew Simpson, then residing in Philadelphia. At the day of dedication, a total of \$3000 had been subscribed toward the cost of the chapel, a testimony to the diligent efforts of the Trustees and to the faithfulness of the membership. In honor of the new Trinity Chapel, the name of Whiskey Road was changed officially to Chapel Avenue at this time, thus marking one of the many positive influences that Trinity would bring to the community over the years to come.

As this was the only church in the community, those who attended worship were of various denominations. This may explain why one early historian of Merchantville said this about Trinity: "generally known as Union Chapel, seats free, doctrinal sermons but once a month." A testimony to the importance of the new church was an early project involving children and the community to purchase a bell to hang in the belfry for ringing out the call to worship each week. To this day, that bell continues to sound forth its message each Sunday.

The "Minutes of the Board of Trustees" record a meeting on March 2, 1866, where a motion was carried that a request be made to the New Jersey Conference for Trinity Chapel to be made a station and placed upon the Camden District. This request was submitted to the proper authority, and, at the next Trustees Meeting, March 10, it was reported that the Presiding Elder was favorable to the application. The New Jersey Conference held its annual session a few days later, March 21, to be exact. The sessions were held in the "Old Third Street Church," which later became First Church, Camden. When the appointments were read by Bishop Levi Scott, the Rev. Robert S. Harris was appointed to the newly established station, Trinity Chapel, Merchantville.

Children's Day

Rev. Robert S. Harris had been preaching 20 years when he entered upon his one-year appointment at Trinity. In his earlier ministry, he had served in the upper part of the state, within the bounds of what is now the Northern New Jersey Conference. From the experience of those days, there was a deep-seated grief eating upon his heart. Serving a two-point charge, with the churches separated by a considerable

distance, necessitated Rev. Harris to spend every other weekend away from the parsonage in Bernardsville. One Saturday, he was burdened in heart when he left for his service of the next day. He was leaving behind him his only child, a little lad of six, seriously ill. He returned home as quickly as possible, on Monday, only to find his son beyond all possible hope of recovery from pneumonia. The boy died shortly thereafter.

This deep loss affected him greatly; however, instead of allowing bitterness to rule him, this devout man immediately adopted, in his heart, all children as his own. His love expressed itself in "every possible effort and sacrifice for the education and moral culture of young folks." Children's Day was a natural out-growth of this sentiment. Pastor Harris disagreed with the teaching of that day that "children should be seen and not heard." He loved to hear their voices, and he was certain that God loved to hear them, too. He concluded that children should have a normal place in the life of the church - but how could this be accomplished?

He prayed and planned. He wanted a regular church service in which to present his innovation, but he had to do some diplomatic maneuvering to make it happen. Finally, on Sunday June 10, 1866, he held a church service which he called Children's Day. There were 18 children in the Sunday School and they all took part in the service. At first, the older folks were not much in favor of letting children stand on the pulpit platform, but when the service was over, they changed their minds and decided to have another Children's Day the following year. Pastor Harris was no longer at Trinity for the second Children's Day, but the tradition had been beautifully and firmly established, thanks to his devotion.

The news of Children's Day eventually spread far and wide and became adopted by other churches and denominations. The original day, the second Sunday in June, in time became universally accepted throughout the world as one of the beautiful observances of the Christian year. A large stained glass window on the north wall of the present sanctuary, dedicated in 1895, commemorates the event with the portrayal of "Christ and the Children" by the artist, Plockorst. The inscription reads: "This church marks the place where Children's Day was originated by its pastor, Rev. Robert S. Harris in the year 1866, and this window is lovingly dedicated to the memory of this event."

Among the 18 children who participated in that first Children's Day, was a little, six year old girl by the name of Katie Sinex Bartine. Kate remained a member of Trinity until her death in the 1950's. Her final



years were spent as a resident in Collingswood Manor, one of the United Methodist Homes of New Jersey. Kate was a delightful personality. From her was received much of what is known about the format of that first observance. She remembered the lovely, white dress she wore and her beautiful bouquet of "store flowers" brought her from Philadelphia by her uncle, Rev. David Bartine. From the very first, it was the one Sunday when little folks dared to climb to the pulpit plat-

form and be the center of attraction with their recitations, dialogues and group singing. Yes, Katie and her schoolmates really sang "Little Sunbeams" on that day away back in 1866, but there were no "drills," for as Miss Bartine explained, "that would have been the next thing to dancing." One special feature was that each child was to bring a perfect rose as a gift to beautify God's house. This tradition of flowers has been honored at Trinity.

Down through time since that first Children's Day in the little chapel, the annual observance has been faithfully retained as a cherished part of the church calendar in Merchantville. On special anniversary occasions, a reenactment of the first observance has been performed by the children of the Sunday School. At the 75th, the 100th, and most recently the 125th Anniversary on June 8, 1991 - this pageant has been a delightful reminder to all.

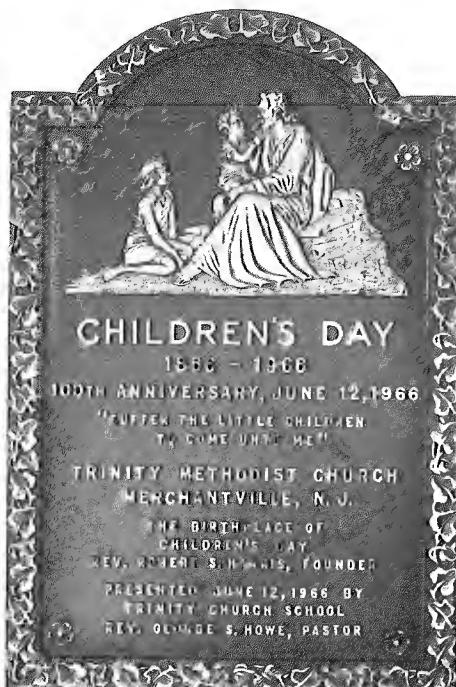
In 1940, the General Conference of the The Methodist Church dropped Children's Day as an official observance and replaced it with Student's Day. For a number of years a valiant effort was waged to have Children's Day restored officially, but to no avail. Rev. Harry S. Henck, a beloved pastor at Trinity (1944-1956) was the leader of this campaign. His legacy of determination has done much to keep the observance of Children's Day the vital part of the Christian Church that it is today.



Children's Day Float in a Merchantville Parade in the early 1920's

The Years that Followed

For nearly thirty years, the Trinity Chapel served the purposes of a constantly growing constituency, but the time finally came when a larger building became necessary. On Sunday, May 5, 1895, the present stone sanctuary was dedicated. The total cost was \$15,234, and, at the time of dedication, the church was nearly debt free. This new structure incorporated the original chapel as a key part of the complex, situated directly adjacent to the main sanctuary. To this day, the "Chapel Room" is preserved and actively used as a special center for much of the activity of the church. At the 100th Anniversary celebration of Children's Day, a bronze commemorative tablet was mounted in the Chapel Room as a constant reminder of this treasured heritage. Unusual memorabilia that are mounted on the rear wall of the Chapel Room include two framed displays which contain photos of every pastor who has served Trinity, beginning of course with Rev. Robert S. Harris.



As the years progressed, major additions and improvements have been made in order to meet the needs of the ministry and the community. These included an educational building in the 1950's, a new parsonage in the 1970's, an elevator addition/sanctuary air conditioning project in the 1980's, just to mention a few. From the very beginning, Trinity congregations have strived to practice good stewardship in the special care of properties entrusted to them for the glory of God.

The 125th Anniversary

The year 1990 marked the 125th Anniversary of the founding of Trinity Chapel. The celebration culminated during November in combination with the annual every member commitment emphasis. The theme was "Celebrating the Past - Commitment to the Future." In addition to the four weeks of special services and activities, a large class of new members was received, a cash 'birthday gift' was presented to the new Hope United Methodist Church in Voorhees, a new pictorial directory was distributed and a unique time line of history was created for the celebration. This latter item was the work of one of the Trinity members who is an artist by avocation. This huge undertaking was approximately 3 feet wide by 70 feet long and was displayed on three walls of the Chapel room for several weeks. The presentation consisted of illustrations and facts relating to significant events in the nation, the local community and Trinity Church. It received much interest and will be retained for later year anniversaries.

Following the final service, the entire congregation assembled on the church lawn for a group picture - a permanent record of those attending the 125th Anniversary of the founding of Trinity Chapel.

On June 8, 1991, Trinity commemorated the 125th Anniversary of the originating of Children's Day with an overflow service of celebration. Central to the service was a dramatic reenactment of the first observance paying faithful attention to the details known from the early records. A very special treat for the children was the presentation to each of them of a copy of an original coloring book, created on the story of Children's Day. This book, titled "Little Sunbeams," was developed specially for the celebration by the same gifted artist who created the timeline for the Church 125th Anniversary.

The climax of the Children's Day celebration story came on June 13, 1991, at St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Ocean City, NJ.

On this, the occasion of the 155th Session of the Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, a resolution by the Commission on Archives and History was passed designating Trinity United Methodist Church, Merchantville, as a United Methodist Historic Site - in recognition of this being the place where Children's Day originated.

The faithful observance of Children's Day will continue in thousands of churches around the world as it surely will continue at Trinity Church, Merchantville. The roots have grown to great depth, and the nurturing is God's blessing for all. This is truly a renewed commitment to the ministry to children everywhere and to the special place that Jesus gives them in His church.



Trinity United Methodist Church
Merchantville

Author's Note: The picture on the cover is from an original sketch of Trinity Chapel by its first pastor, Rev. Robert S. Harris.

**HIGH WINDS OF NEW JERSEY
NORTHEAST JURISDICTIONAL HISTORICAL MEETING
STONY POINT, NEW YORK
1991**

By special request, this report is included in *The Historical Trail*. Each Conference is requested to make a four minute presentation telling about a person, event, or circumstances unique to that Conference. "Beginnings" in the specific Conference is greatly appreciated.

A high wind of change has prevailed in the corridor state of New Jersey since the first, authenticated, European visitors—the French—landed at Sandy Hook in 1524. The ocean winds brought the settlers; the winds of religious feelings and expressions aided the winds for survival in a new land, and New Jersey was born.

The Dutch and those from Connecticut started settlements in the northern part of New Jersey while the Swedes and the Quakers settled in the southern part - each bringing its own religion. Then along came the first group of Methodist settlers from Ireland. Religiously, the high winds then became a tornado at times. Add the British and the American Revolution later on, and the winds were really gusting over this small piece of territory measuring only 166 miles north to south and 57 miles at its widest point, east to west!

This land was first called NOVA CAESAREA until Carteret arrived and became politically active, even becoming governor. To honor Carteret, who had successfully defended the Isle of Jersey, Nova Caesarea became New Jersey.

The earliest New Jersey Methodist Class is thought to have started in Burlington in 1770. Captain Thomas Webb with his green eye patch, his sword and British uniform is known as "the father of New Jersey Methodism." He established Methodist Classes in Burlington, Pember-ton, and Trenton. Most historians agree that Burlington probably was the location of the first Methodist Class in New Jersey. Joseph Toy (1748-1826) worked with Captain Webb in establishing these Class Meetings. Joseph Toy's house is still standing near Palmyra. There is a report that it is now used as a stable.

Methodism had a rapid growth. In 1772, 19 Methodists were recorded in New Jersey. In 1773, the first conference of American Methodism

recorded 200 Methodists in New Jersey. In 1990, the Annual Conference recorded, 82,976 Methodists in southern New Jersey alone.

Speaking of Conference Minutes, the first published New Jersey Conference Minutes occurred in 1838. The Minutes were 16 pages. Last year, the 1990 Minutes were over 300 pages.

One of the "firsts" in Methodism that has come from Southern New Jersey is the origin of Children's Day.

(Read the article *The Birthplace of Children's Day* in this book.)

Asbury Church of Camden also has a stained glass window of Jesus and the children, but two of the children are from the Asbury Sunday School. They are now adult members of the church.

Asbury Park is the first town in the country named for Francis Asbury when he laid the corner stone for Asbury Chapel. It was also here at Asbury Park that the Itinerant Sisterhood, consisting of Methodist ministers' wives in the Southern New Jersey Conference, was organized. The organization was intended to bring a closer bond between Methodist ministers' spouses.

The high winds of fashion really blew when I first came to New Jersey and attended my first Sisterhood Meeting held in the Flanders Hotel during the Conference Session in Ocean City. White gloves, a gorgeous hat, and a fabulous dress were necessities for this luncheon. Walking through the hotel lobby was like a fashion parade. The lobby was always full with on-lookers, especially preachers!

This organization is still active, but with many changes and a new name. With the influx of female ministers, we gladly changed the name to accomodate the male spouses. We are now the Wesley Fellowship—and very informal. At our Spring Luncheon two weeks ago, four, brave, male spouses attended. Although looking as though they wished they were miles away when the meeting started, they looked very contented and had regained their masculine bravado by the time the luncheon and program were over. Food can work miracles.

The high wind of compassion for those in other lands and in our own land produced, in 1870, the Women's Foreign Aid Society. In 1884, the Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized in Ocean Grove. These two groups with the Ladies Aid Society united in 1940 to form the Woman's Society of Christian Service, now known as the United Methodist Women.

The Sacrament of Communion has always been a high wind in Methodism. To take communion in the early days of New Jersey Methodism, one must be a member of a Class (later church), have a

ticket of good standing in order to get in, and must not wear enormous bonnets, ruffles, nor rings.

In 1869, the First Methodist Church of Vineland started a change in Communion services that has affected all of Methodism.

Dr. T. B. Welch, one of the founders of Welch's Grape Juice Company which began in Vineland, was elected Communion Steward in First Church. He accepted the position under the condition that he would be permitted to use the pure juice of grapes, pasteurized in a new method developed by his company. This marks the beginning of the use of unfermented grape juice for Communion in Methodist Churches.

Yes, the winds brought the settlers; the wind of Methodism is still strong in Southern New Jersey, but the greatest high wind, since wind is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, has been the leading of the Holy Spirit throughout southern New Jersey in the lives of people and the Spirit's blessing upon Methodism when we allow Him to lead us. God has been and is with us! Blow, ye winds, blow!

Written and delivered to the Jurisdiction
BY MIRIAM L. COFFEE

THE TRAIL OF THE GLENDALE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND THE TULIP TREES

(INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY BOYD F. BEDLYON, JR.-CHURCH MEMBER)

The "Little White Church in Glendale" was constructed as a place of worship on land donated by Alexander Cooper on November 20, 1855. At that time the ministry to the people was in the form of religious education on a weekly basis. Formal church services were a rarity and when held were a special occasion to be sure. It was only a bit more sophisticated than the original circuit riding preacher because the minister came whenever he could make the rounds. However, this is not to say that the religious training of its members was taken lightly. Very strong commitments were made by a small group of people. These early leaders maintained this 30 x 40 feet building as a focal point for religious instruction. In addition, the basement was used for public education where family names such as Engle, Hillman, Stafford, and Stratton were well known. Several of those served in a guiding or leading capacity and played a key role in the continuity of Glendale Church's testimony. Perhaps the wishes of the benefactor were kept in mind: The building must be used at least once a year for religious service or the property would revert to the Cooper family.

A series of speakers would minister to the flock on Sunday afternoons. Between the years of 1892 and 1899, there were eleven pastors who were sent from the Haddonfield Methodist Church. Records show that the relationship between the two churches was of a sustaining capacity. Glendale Church had dinners and raised money for their rebuilding project. At this point, Glendale was known as a Society, patterned after the original Methodist Church organizational groups. The Society's name is recorded as Glendale Methodist Episcopal Church. A handwritten report for the Fourth Quarter of 1897 indicates the following:

Members: 34

Pastoral Labor: 12 sermons and 5 class meetings

Average Sunday School Attendance: 26

Paid to Pastor: \$27.08

Paid to Presiding Elder: \$2.00

A church of this size had a particular challenge financially. The year 1899 was extremely difficult for Glendale. The fifty dollars the local school board paid to rent the facility went a long way in meeting the pastor's salary of \$30.00 a quarter. There were times when there was not enough even to meet this obligation, and the pastor waited.

The physical aspects of the property are interesting to recall. The church not only provided a place for worship but had a shed next to it where members could park their horses and buggies. This was located on the west side of the building. In the early 1900's it was decided that the worn, wooden, basement floor would be replaced with concrete. All members were recruited to do what was within their capacity to get the job done.

One lad was asked to pick up all the bags of cement with his horse-drawn wagon on his return from Camden where he was delivering produce to market. John Stafford did as asked. All was well until a sudden summer thunderstorm loomed straight ahead. Since he was not so far as Haddonfield, he had visions of all those bags of cement being soaked by rain. He hurried the horses to Haddonfield where he ran them right into a shed—cement, wagon, horses and all. Quickly, the storm passed, and the load was delivered safe and dry.

The church building came to be a center of some social activities other than fund raisers. A boys' group met there. Some of their actions even included boxing matches with local talent.

In 1929, after a long lapse between election of trustees, Wesley Stafford called for a meeting. He was, at the time, not only the local school superintendent but also a catalyst in the organization and education at Glendale Church. He was a role model for the youth and a respected leader among adults. A young girl, named Reatha Engle, observed him placing a dime in the offering plate one Sunday. She was so impressed that she thought to herself, "I hope, when I grow up, I'll be able to put a whole dime in the offering plate."

After Wesley Stafford passed away, a real void was realized. The need for a leader was felt by all. Ruth Engle contacted the Haddonfield Church, and once again they provided a leader. However, Wesley knew all too well the struggle to meet financial obligations. He left \$2,500 in a trust fund to the tiny church to help even after he was gone.

In 1932, a "portion of the land deemed necessary" was sold to Camden County from the front of the church property for road widening. The church had prospered enough by 1936 to add a kitchen to the basement. All of \$300 was borrowed from a local bank for the undertaking.

During the 1940's, a faithful member of the flock took on a job with a humble title when she was actually one of the spiritual leaders. Ruth Engle served as janitor for thirty, long years. A generation of children grew up looking to "Aunt Ruth" who was the Sunday School Superintendent as well.

During the thirty year period, some dramatic changes took place. Physically, a vestibule was added. Mrs. Engle recalls having just completed painting it when an errant driver hit the corner of the building, causing the building to shift ever so slightly and throwing the new paint out of line. The change that was most significant took place when the church reorganized.

Glendale Church moved from the unclear role of a fledgling appendage to become Glendale Methodist Church under the local Methodist Conference district. A regularly appointed minister to hold formal Sunday worship services and a separate Sunday School then began to function. The first minister was Rev. William Moyer.

In the 1970's, the east side of the property was reduced in size for road widening. In 1984, another driver strayed off the highway and caused major damage to the stone foundation.

As Glendale Church stands today, reflecting its rich past, one can see much more than a familiar building on a busy corner. It has been a spiritual lighthouse for families in the area for generations.

DEDICATION OF THE 133 YEAR-OLD TREES IN FRONT OF GLENDALE METHODIST CHURCH

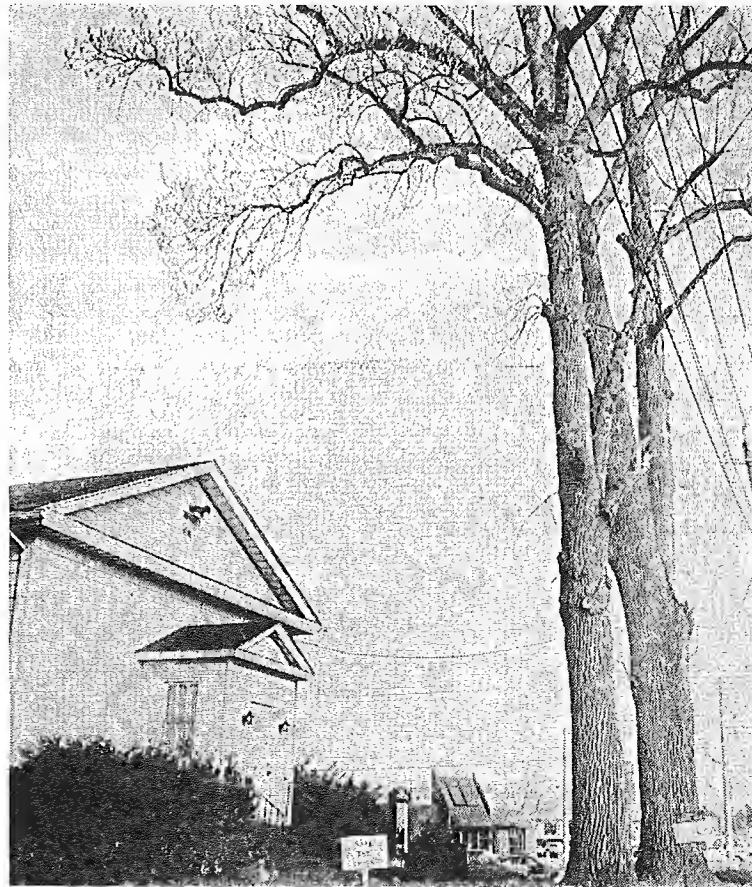
April 24, 1988

We dedicate these stately trees (*Lirodendron Tulipifera*), planted in 1855, to Governor McGowan Voorhees (1856-1927).

He was governor of the State of New Jersey at the time when tree residents of Waterford Township petitioned the State of New Jersey to make *this section* of Waterford a separate township.

Governor Voorhees' family came from a village in Holland called "Hees." It is significant to note that our beloved tulip trees bear blossoms each spring, closely resembling the famous tulips in Holland.

The first section of what is now Voorhees Township was Glendale. The original settlers were the Matlack, the Collins, and the Stafford families. When Ephraim Tomlinson opened a general store at the corner of Haddonfield and White Horse Roads, this area became the



Village of Glendale. Walt Whitman, the famous poet and a resident of Camden, New Jersey, was known to have visited the general store and the Glendale Church. He stayed with some of the residents of Glendale, enjoying the rural area, and bathing in its creeks. A second store was opened by Josiah Engle and later owned by George Stafford. The Stafford and Engle families played a prominent role in the history and the growth of Glendale.

The ground for the Glendale Methodist Church was donated by Alexander Cooper, with the stipulation that the church be opened at least one hour each year for services, or if not honored the land and the property would be returned to the estate of Alexander Cooper. This commitment has been upheld through the 133 years of this church.

Although, there were times when only one member was in attendance. That person was Kesiah Bates. Many of the families that attend here today can trace their lines back to the original members of Glendale Methodist Church.

Today let us give special tribute to these faithful tulip trees. They are a witness to the history of Glendale, a witness to God's presence with us day by day, and they witness to us with a hope for the future of this church and to this community.

The above dedication occurred at a Save the Trees dedication service in the Glendale United Methodist Church in 1988.

In 1932 and 1981, land was removed from the front of the Glendale Church so that the road could be widened. Not much land remained in front of the church. Again, in 1988, the county planned to widen the Haddonfield-Berlin Road from a two to a four lane highway. This meant that more land would disappear so that traffic would be only five feet from the church's front steps. As Mr. Stafford (whose ancestors were members when the church was organized) said, "Going to church would be like walking down the New Jersey Turnpike."

Another disaster would also occur if the Road Commission had its way. Two 124 - 140 foot tulip trees that were planted in 1855 would be cut down. Although the highway department has heavily pruned these trees, they still continue to bloom each Spring. They are an historic landmark. They are practically a part of the Glendale Church since they were planted at the time the church was built.

The church members, denied a restraining order by the court, were joined by the Voorhees Historical Society and appeared before Camden County's freeholders meeting to plead the case of the doomed, Holland, tulip trees. It was noted that most of the historic landmarks of the community have been destroyed. Very few remain. One hundred and thirty year old tulip trees cannot be replaced.

Today, in 1992, the tulip trees are blooming in front of the Glendale United Methodist Church because a few people cared and did something about the problem.

MIRIAM L. COFFEE
(Used material supplied by Glendale Church files)

THE ANNUAL AND GENERAL CONFERENCE INVASIONS

Miriam L. Coffee

In Biblical history, God used Deborah to lead an army to victory on the battlefield. How the enemy soldiers must have laughed—a female general! After the battles, no enemy soldier laughed.

Queen Esther, in following God's command, had to defy the "long time rules" of the king and the foreign country in which she dwelled. Ignoring danger and ridicule, Esther saved her people.

Mary Magdalene, ignoring darkness, the hatred of those who had crucified Jesus, and her own downcast spirits and sorrow, was the first to find the empty tomb and the risen Jesus. Jesus gave Mary an unusual job to do: she was to deliver the first Christian sermon after Jesus' crucifixion! She was to "go and tell" that Jesus is risen! He is alive! The first Christian sermon after the resurrection was delivered by a woman! That same sermon is still being preached after two thousand years, however, primarily by men until the twentieth century.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when women were denied participation in the major organizations of the Methodist Episcopal Church and ordination (even licensing) to preach, the conflict seemed to center around the General Conference and who could be a member. In the New Jersey Conference, laymen (*men* literally) were not full members until 1939. What chance was there for women?

Women had a harder struggle than the laymen for Conference recognition. Early in the twentieth century, Maria Gibson knelt at a missionary conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and prayed: "Dear Lord, we pray for the men. Thou knowest how they have troubled and worried us. They have been hard to bear sometimes, but we thank Thee that they are better than they used to be." I am sure this prayer was echoed and re-echoed many times.

God, however, opens new doors when human beings mistakenly close doors. The women, denied active participation in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, applied their efforts and talents in establishing such important organizations as the Deaconess work (1888), Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (1869—in NJ 1870), and the Woman's Home Missionary Society (1880—in NJ 1885) of which the wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes

was the first president in 1880. God does open doors; however, we must go through them to find what is on the other side. What church has not been greatly benefited by the United Methodist Women, an organization developing from the efforts of these earlier women.

Women Ministers, as Conference members with full clergy rights, first came into the Southern New Jersey Conference in 1974, eighteen years after full clergy rights had been granted to women. Gladys Showack, in 1974, was the first woman probationary member of the Southern New Jersey Conference. In 1975, Margaret Abrams, Lynn Cheney, Carolyn Montgomery, and Ellen Wirta were ordained deacons. In 1977, Margaret Abrams, Lynn Cheney Hardy, and Carolyn Montgomery were ordained elders. These three became the first women to have full clergy rights in the Southern New Jersey Conference.

It was 1982 when Sandra Murphy became the first clergy woman elected to Jurisdictional Conference by the Southern New Jersey Conference. Lanie Price was elected as a clergy reserve delegate.

Just as the Methodist Protestant Church and other denominations recognized ordination of women before the Methodist Episcopal Church did, Annual Conferences elected women delegates to General Conference before the General Conference would accept them. General Conference refused to seat the feminine delegates and passed rules preventing women from becoming delegates.

It was 1936 before a woman was elected to General Conference as a delegate from New Jersey. She was a Deaconess, Helen Phillips (Neary) of Manasquan and a member of St. Paul's Church in Trenton. She was twenty-six years old when she was elected the first woman delegate from New Jersey to General Conference. Three years later, Bishop Richardson ordained Helen as a local deacon. In 1943, Bishop Richardson ordained her as an elder.

Because she traveled so much by public transportation performing her duties as Deaconess and lady Minister, she received the title of "A Lady Circuit Rider."

God still uses those who are willing to accomplish His work—regardless of who they are.

Credit: Much of this information is taken, with permission of the author, from *What God Has Wrought* by Reverend Robert Steelman.

NEWS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The year 1991 marked the celebration of the Bicentennial of the death of Methodism's founder, John Wesley. On this side of the Atlantic the Southern New Jersey Conference celebration, "John Wesley: 200 Years," was the major event marking our founder's death. An afternoon panel and a major address in the evening of March 2nd in Moorestown's First United Methodist Church, brought together leading Wesleyan scholars from across the country. These included: Dr. Richard P. Heitzenrater, Professor of Wesley Studies at Perkins School of Theology and General Editor, The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley; Dr. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., General Secretary, General Commission on Archives and History; Drew professors, the Rev. Heather M. Elkins and Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe; Bishop Neil L. Irons; our own Dr. Robert J. Williams and the Rev. Timothy E. Kimbrough, noted baritone soloist and Charles Wesley scholar. Copies of the day's proceedings can be secured by writing Dr. Charles A. Green, Box 6095, Philadelphia, PA 19114. Dr. Green, CAH Chair, was the General Chairman of the Wesley Bicentennial Task Force.

A major event in 1992 is the Historical Society's sponsored United Methodist Heritage Tour, an 8 day, October 12 to 19, bus trip, visiting major United Methodist Shrines in the Southeast Jurisdiction. Led by Conference Historian, Robert B. Steelman, the following shrines will be visited: Whitaker's Chapel near Enfield, North Carolina; John Wesley's Parish in Savannah, Georgia; St. Simons Island, Georgia, another site connected with the ministry of Charles and John Wesley; the town of Oxford, Georgia and Emory University; Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, home of the American Section of the World Methodist Council with its Susanna Wesley Garden and major Wesleyan Museum; and Acuff's Chapel, Blountsville, Tennessee. In addition, historic Savannah, beautiful St. Simons Island, Stone Mountain, the Smokey Mountain National Park and Gatlinburg, Natural Bridge, Virginia and the lovely Shenandoah Valley will all be explored. Tour arrangements are by Laverne Heulitt of Guardian Angel Tours. Tour information can be obtained by contacting the Rev. Robert B. Steelman, 36 Delaware Ave., Penns Grove, NJ 08069, or by phone at 609-299-3938 or 0074.

A significant upgrade in the Historical Library at Pennington School will soon be underway. A computer has been purchased and Dr. Charles Green will program the catalog of our library holdings into it. This will enable us to fine-tune our collection, weed out what doesn't belong and make it much easier for researchers to use. Our collection has been enhanced by the recent addition of 50 volumes from the library of the Rev. F. Elwood Perkins, retired minister of our Conference. Any persons doing research on the history of United Methodism, particularly within southern New Jersey, should avail themselves of the resources of our historical library housed in the basement of the Bishops Building on the campus of Pennington School.

This issue of *The Historical Trail* marks the completion of 30 years of publication. The Rev. Robert Steelman edited the first six issues through 1967. Beginning in 1968 through this issue, Dr. J. Hillman Coffee has been the able editor. He has done a superb job of bringing to our attention a wide range of stories of historical interest to Southern New Jersey Conference Methodists and those readers beyond our Conference. This collection is regularly received by major United Methodist Libraries in the Northeast Jurisdiction and beyond. From a small 12 page mimeographed edition, *The Trail* has become a significant and professionally done publication. Health reasons have forced Dr. Coffee to resign his position as editor with this edition. We wish him well and heartily commend him for a job well done. His place will be ably filled as Mrs. Miriam Coffee, Historical Society President, announces the appointment of the Rev. Charles A. Green as the new editor beginning with the 1993 edition. All correspondence, questions or manuscripts for possible publication should be submitted to him.

Historical Society dues are \$5.00 per person or \$8.00 per couple per year. There is also a Benjamin Abbott Life Membership at \$75.00 per member or church. Dues should be sent to Mrs. Edna Molyneaux, 768 E. Garden Road, Vineland, NJ 08360. Make checks payable to Southern New Jersey Historical Society.

REV. ROBERT B. STEELMAN
Historian

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(Note: The first issue of *The Historical Trail* appeared in 1962. This issue marks 30 years of publishing. There are two exceptions to the yearly publication. The 1969-70 *Trail* was a double issue marking the Pilmore-Boardman Bicentennial. While actually published in 1970, it bears the date of 1969. No *Trail* was published in 1986 because of the publication of *What God Has Wrought, A History of the Southern New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church*. Two indexes have appeared in 1972 and 1982, each covering a ten year period. The index below is a cumulative index covering all issues of *The Historical Trail* published.)

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